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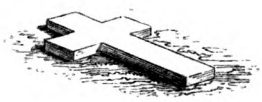


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THE

Life of Nicholas Ridley,

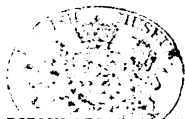
BISHOP OF LONDON.



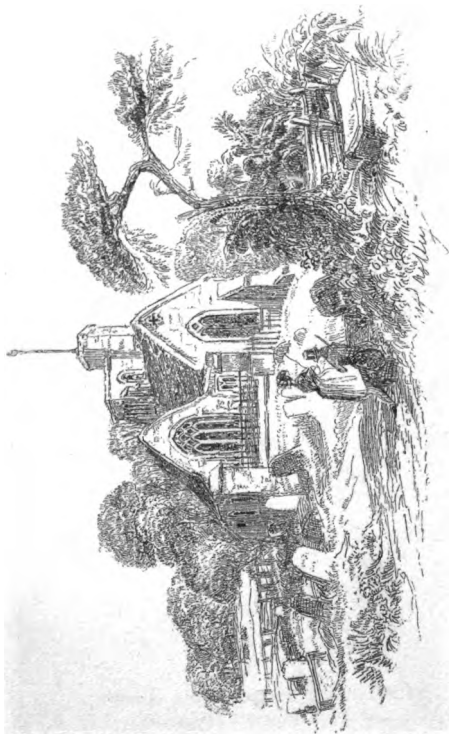
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[The following sketch is compiled from Rev. W. PALMER's
"History of the Church," and Dr. WORDSWORTH'S
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LONDON: ROBSON, LEVEY, AND FRANKLYN,
Great New Street, Fetter Lane.



HERNE CHURCH, KENT.



The Life of Nicholas Ridley,

BISHOP OF LONDON.

CHAPTER I.



NICHOLAS RIDLEY was born at Willowmont, in Northumberland, in the beginning of the sixteenth century: he learned his grammar at Newcastle, and was then removed to the University of Cambridge, where he was soon remarked for his learning. After this, he went abroad to pursue his studies; and in 1537, when he had returned to England, Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, appointed him one of his chaplains. Soon after, being made vicar of Herne, he diligently instructed his flock in the doctrines of the Gospel; and we are told that the people swarmed about him like bees, desiring the sweet flowers and wholesome juice of his doctrine, which he not only preached, but shewed the same by his life, in such holiness of living that even his enemies could never find any thing to reprove in it.

In 1540 he was chosen Master of Pembroke Hall at Cambridge, where he had been brought up, and

where he had diligently studied the Scriptures, as we may learn from the following words of the farewell which he afterwards addressed to it: "In thy orchard," he says to his college, "(the walls, butts, and trees, if they could speak, would bear me witness,) I learned without book almost all St. Paul's epistles and the other canonical epistles; of which study, although in time a great part did depart from me, yet the sweet smell thereof I trust I shall carry with me into heaven; for the profit thereof I think I have felt in all my life-time ever after."

He also studied attentively the writings of the holy fathers of ancient times, and of other learned men; and by these means he began to discover what great corruptions had been brought into the Church by the popes of Rome,—all those corruptions which we now call popery, and which had gone on increasing by degrees since the early Christian times, when the pure doctrines of the apostles were held. Amongst other things, he discovered how much the doctrine had been corrupted which concerns the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,—what rash and irreverent things were said of it, attempting to explain the mystery which our Lord left unexplained; whilst the mode of administering it was changed from that which He had ordained, and the Cup was given only to the clergy, not to the other members of Christ's Church.

At the same time that Nicholas Ridley was aware of the popish corruptions, and wished to reform them, he did not approve of all that was done by the persons who were then called Protestants, (as protesting or witnessing against the errors of the

papists): of these Protestants some were ambitious, worldly men, who wanted to gain the possessions of the clergy for themselves, and to turn the houses and money which had been left long ago for religious and charitable uses to their own profit. In 1547 he was consecrated bishop of Rochester, and was zealous in promoting the reformation of abuses; but he shewed great firmness in resisting such measures as he thought contrary to justice or religion. On one occasion of this kind he wrote to the lord-protector Somerset, who governed for king Edward VI. whilst he was a boy, and declared that his conscience would not allow him to take any part in the business which he had been called to. By this he ran the risk of offending most grievously the chief ruler of England. Such firmness was a pledge of the courage with which he afterwards faced death for conscience-sake.

A writer who lived near his time gives this account of him after he was made bishop:

“ Now will I speak something further, particularly of his person and conditions. He was a man right comely and well-proportioned in all points, both in complexion and lineaments of the body. He took all things in good part, bearing no malice nor rancour from his heart, but straightway forgetting all injuries and offences done against him. He was very kind and natural to his kinsfolk; and yet not bearing with them any thing otherwise than right would require, giving them always for a general rule,—yea, to his own brother and sister,—that they doing evil should seek or look for nothing at his hand, but should be as strangers

and aliens unto him, and they to be his brother and sister which used honesty and a godly way of life.

“ He, using all kinds of ways to mortify himself, was given to much prayer and contemplation. For duly every morning, so soon as his apparel was done on him, he went forthwith to his bed-chamber, and there, upon his knees, prayed the space of half an hour; which being done, immediately he went to his study (if there came no other business to interrupt him), where he continued till ten of the clock, and then came to common prayer, daily used in his house. The prayers being done, he went to dinner, where he used little talk, except otherwise occasion by some had been ministered; and then it was sober, discreet, and wise, and sometimes merry, as cause required.

“ The dinner done, which was not very long, he used to sit an hour, or thereabouts, talking or playing at the chess; that done, he returned to his study, and there would continue, except suitors or business abroad were occasion of the contrary, until five of the clock at night; and then would come to common prayer, as in the forenoon; which being finished, he went to supper, behaving himself there as at his dinner before. After supper, recreating himself in playing at chess the space of an hour, he would then return again to his study, continuing there till eleven of the clock at night, which was his common hour to go to bed; then saying his prayers upon his knees, as in the morning when he rose. Being at his manor of Fulham, as divers times he used to be, he read daily a lecture to his family at the common prayer, beginning at the Acts of the Apostles, and so going

through all the Epistles of St. Paul; giving to every man that could read a New Testament; hiring them besides with money to learn by heart certain principal chapters, but especially the 13th chapter of the Acts; reading also to his household oftentimes the 101st Psalm; being marvellous careful over his family, that they might be a spectacle of all virtue and honesty to others. To be short, as he was godly and virtuous himself, so nothing but virtue and godliness reigned in his house, feeding them with the food of our Saviour Jesus Christ."

When Bonner was removed from being bishop of London, because he would not give up the corruptions of popery, Bishop Ridley was put in his place. He shewed great kindness to Mrs. Bonner, the mother of the late bishop. When he was at the manor of Fulham (a house belonging to the bishops of London), he always sent for Mrs. Bonner, who lived near, to come to him at dinner and supper, with one Mrs. Mungey, Dr. Bonner's sister, saying, "Go for my mother Bonner;" and when she came, she was always placed in a chair at the head of the table, and as kindly welcomed and treated as if she had really been his own mother; even if any noblemen of the king's council were present, she was never displaced from her seat; for the bishop would say to them, "By your lordships' favour, this place of right and custom is for my mother Bonner." He also shewed the greatest kindness and courtesy to Heath, late archbishop of York, who was confined in his house for a year.

Bishop Ridley having once discovered the old ways of the Church, continued stedfastly to walk

in them; and he checked those who would have rushed into novelties, and would have set up patterns of their own, when the superstitions of the papists were cleared away. He wished to be a follower of the apostles, to continue in their doctrine and fellowship, and to hold fast the faith once committed to the saints. As he wrote afterwards to a friend—"You have known me long indeed, in the which time it hath chanced me, as you say, to mislike some things. It is true, I grant; for sudden changes without substantial and necessary cause, and the heady setting forth of extremities, I did never love." And a great blessing it was to the Church of England that this "great upholder of Catholic truth," as he has since been called, was enabled to prevent many of the changes which rash men would have made, who trusted more to their own judgment than to that safe rule, that we should follow the belief which has been held in the Church *always, every where, of all men.*

He applied himself with all his power to reform the abuses in the disposal of livings, which arose from a spirit of covetousness. He saw with grief the distress of the poor in his city, who since the monasteries had been destroyed, from which they had received much alms, were reduced to a sad state of want; and he entreated the king to give the royal house at Bridewell as lodgings for these afflicted people, which request was granted him.

When that pious young king, Edward VI., was afflicted with his last illness, Bishop Ridley one day was appointed to preach before him; and in his sermon he much recommended charity as a duty binding on all men, but especially on those

who are in high place, as well in respect of their having much power to do good, as of their being obliged to give examples of goodness to others. The same day the king sent for him, caused him to sit in a chair beside him, and would not suffer him to remain uncovered. Then, after courteous thanks, he went over the principal points of the sermon, and continued thus: "I took myself to be especially touched by your sermon, as well in regard to the ability which God hath given me, as in regard of the example which of me He will require. For as in the kingdom I am next under God, so must I most nearly approach Him in goodness and mercy; for as our miseries stand most in need of help from Him, so are we the greatest debtors, debtors to all that are miserable, and shall have the greatest account to give of our dispensation therein. And therefore, my lord, as you have given me (I thank you) this general exhortation, so direct me, I entreat you, by what particular actions I may this way best discharge my duties." The bishop remained silent for some time, and then, weeping for joy, he besought his majesty for time to answer such a question; and having consulted the citizens of London, he returned again to the king, who gave the Greyfriars, as an hospital for the support of infants, the aged, idiots, and cripples; St. Bartholomew's for wounded soldiers and sick persons; and Bridewell for the correction of idle and disorderly persons. These, with the hospital of St. Thomas, he richly endowed; and when he had signed the deed to that effect, he with reverent gesture and speech thanked God for prolonging his life to finish that business.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER the young king's death, Ridley's days of peace were at an end. When Mary became queen, he was driven from his bishopric, and committed to the Tower. Whilst he was there, some commissioners from the queen sat with him at table, when he dined with the lieutenant of the Tower, and entered into discourse on matters of faith, inquiring what was the meaning of the word *heretic*. When the bishop found that they wished to draw him into the discourse, he asked if they were appointed to examine him in these matters; in which case he would plainly declare his faith. But if not, he desired leave either to speak his mind freely, or else to hold his peace. They answered, that they all wished to be his friends, and hoped to find that he agreed with them; and so having again desired leave to speak his mind freely, he began to talk. He told them how much he wished for unity, so it were with truth, and joined to Christ our Head: such an unity as St. Paul speaks of, saying, "one faith, one God, one baptism." As for antiquity, he believed the saying of the learned father, Irenæus, "That which is first is true." Our religion was first taught by Christ Himself, by His apostles, and by many good men that from the beginning did succeed next unto them; and he believed that those old writers, who wrote before the bishops of Rome had set up their tyranny over the Church,

all agreed in their opinions of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

"In faith," said Master Pope, one of those who were conversing with him, "I would give forty pound that ye were of a good opinion. For I assure you, I have heard you, and had an affection to you."

"I thank you, Master Pope," he answered, "for your heart and mind. And ye know I were a very fool if I would in this matter dissent from you, if that in my conscience the truth did not enforce me so to do. For I wis* (as ye do perceive, I trow,) it is something out of my way, if I would esteem worldly gain."

It was on the subject of this Holy Sacrament especially that the papists accused him of heresy; whilst he held firmly to the ancient belief and the writings of the early fathers, and only rejected the inventions devised in later times by the popes and their supporters.

It appears that the bishop was kept in the Tower through the winter of this year, 1553, and the first part of 1554; and that during this time he used to write to his fellow-prisoner, Hugh Latimer, bishop of Worcester, when they were confined in separate apartments. Ridley greatly respected this aged bishop, and wished to have his assistance in preparing himself to resist the attacks of the enemy. Though he himself was more learned than Bishop Latimer, he distrusted his own learning and his own strength; and, looking with reverence on Latimer's grey hairs, he loved to call him his father.

* I know.

He thus answered one of Latimer's letters:—

“ In writing again, ye have done me an unspeakable pleasure; and I pray that the Lord may requite it you in that day; for I have received great comfort at your words. But yet I am not so filled withal, but that I thirst much more now than before to drink more of that cup of yours, wherein ye mingle unto me profitable with pleasant. I pray you, good father, let me have one draught more to comfort my stomach. For surely, except the Lord assist me with His gracious aid in the time of His service, I know I shall play but the part of a white-livered knight.* But truly my trust is in Him, that in mine infirmity He should try Himself strong, and that He can make the coward in His cause to fight like a man.

“ Sir, now I look daily when Diotrephes† with his warriors shall assault me; wherefore I pray you, good father, for that you are an old soldier, and God knoweth I am but a young soldier, and as yet of small experience in these fits,—help me, I pray you, to buckle on my harness.”‡

And then he went on to propose some of those objections which he expected to have brought against him, and asked Latimer's advice as to the answers which he had written. In these answers, he shewed the necessity of removing corruptions out of the Church, and strengthened himself by the examples of holy men in the history of the Bible, and among the Christians of the first ages,

* A cowardly soldier.

† Bp. Gardiner, one of the greatest persecutors of that day.

‡ Armour.

who were spoken against, and had many enemies opposing them. He spoke also of the charge brought against him, that he was disobeying the queen by refusing to conform to the popish customs; in answer to which he said that he must give to his prince that which belonged to the prince, and to God that which is God's. He called to mind the saying of the Emperor Valentinian, in choosing the bishop of Milan, when he said, "Set him in the bishop's seat, to whom, if we (as man) do offend at any time, we may submit ourselves." He recalled the example of St. Polycarp the martyr, who said, "We are taught to give honour unto princes, and those powers which be of God; but such honour as is not contrary to God's religion." And this prayer Bishop Ridley offered up for himself, supposing himself accused of sedition and disobedience:—

"O heavenly Father, the Father of all wisdom, understanding, and true strength, I beseech Thee for Thy only Son our Saviour Christ's sake, look mercifully upon me, wretched creature; and send Thine Holy Spirit into my breast, that not only I may understand, according to Thy wisdom, how this pestilent and deadly dart is to be borne off, and with what answer it is to be beaten back, but also when I must join to fight the field for the glory of Thy name, that then I, being strengthened with the defence of Thy right hand, may manfully stand in the confession of Thy faith and of Thy truth, and continue in the same unto the end of my life, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."

At the end of his answers, he thus again ad-

dresses Bishop Latimer: " Hitherunto ye see, good father, how I have in words only made, as it were, a flourish before the fight, which I shortly look after, and how I have begun to prepare certain kinds of weapons to fight against the adversaries of Christ, and to muse with myself how the darts of the old enemy may be borne off, and after what sort I may smite him again with the sword of the Spirit. I learn also hereby to be in use with armour, and to essay how I can go armed. In Tyndall, where I was born, not far from the Scottish borders, I have known my countrymen to watch night and day in their harness, such as they had; that is, in their jacks, and their spears in their hands (you call them northern gads), specially when they had any privy warning of the coming of the Scots. And so doing, although at every such bickerings some of them spent their lives, yet by such means, like pretty* men, they defended their country. And those that so died, I think that, before God, they died in a good quarrel of Christ our Saviour, in the defence of His own divine ordinances by the which He giveth unto us life and immortality; yea, in the quarrel of faith and Christian religion, wherein resteth our everlasting salvation, shall we not watch? Shall we not go always armed, ever looking when our adversary (which like a roaring lion seeketh whom he may devour) shall come upon us by reason of our slothfulness? Yea, and woe be unto us, if he can oppress us unawares, which undoubtedly he will do, if he find us sleep-

* Brave.

ing. Let us awake, therefore; for if the good man of the house knew at what hour the thief would come, he would surely watch, and not suffer his house to be broken up. Let us awake, therefore, I say: let us not suffer our house to be broken up: 'Resist the devil,' saith St. James, 'and he will flee from you.' Let us, therefore, resist him manfully; and, taking the cross upon our shoulders, let us follow our captain, Christ, who, by His own blood, hath dedicated and hallowed the way which leadeth unto the Father; that is, to the Light which no man can attain, the Fountain of the everlasting joys. Let us follow, I say, whither He calleth and allureth us, that after these afflictions, which last but for a moment, whereby He trieth our faith as gold by the fire, we may everlastingly reign and triumph with Him in the glory of the Father, and that through the same our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen. Amen.

"Good father, forasmuch as I have determined with myself to pour forth these my cogitations into your bosom, here methinketh I see you suddenly lifting up your head towards Heaven, after your manner; and then looking upon me with your prophetic countenance, and speaking unto me with these or like words, 'Trust not, my son, to these word-weapons; for the kingdom of God is not in words, but in power. And remember always the words of the Lord, 'Do not imagine aforehand what and how you will speak. For it shall be given you, even in that same hour, what

ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.'

"I pray you, therefore, father, pray for me, that such a complete harness of the Spirit, such boldness of mind, may be given unto me, that I may, out of a true faith, say with David, 'I will not trust in my bow, and it is not my sword that shall save me. For He hath no pleasure in the strength of an horse,' &c.; 'but the Lord's delight is in them that fear Him, and put their trust in His mercy.' I beseech you pray; pray that I may enter this fight only in the name of God; and that when all is past, I being not overcome, through His gracious aid may remain and stand fast in Him till that day of the Lord, in the which to them that obtain the victory shall be given the lively manna to eat, and a triumphant crown for evermore."

He ended by begging that his friend would let his servant read these answers to him; and, as he should see occasion, correct them with his own pen. To which Bishop Latimer answered, that his harness was well buckled on; but he would still pray for him as he desired, trusting in a like return from him; and then encouraged him to be steadfast, and not fear those who could only kill the body.



CHAPTER III.

IN April 1554, Bishop Ridley was removed to Oxford, together with Bishop Latimer, and Cranmer archbishop of Canterbury. They were all three called to dispute with the Romanists concerning the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. For this purpose they were brought to St. Mary's Church at Oxford; the archbishop was first questioned, and afterwards Bishop Ridley. They asked him whether he would dispute; and he answered, that "as long as God gave him life, He should not only have his heart, but also his mouth and pen, to defend His truth;" but he required time and books. They said, he could not have time allowed him, and that he should dispute on Tuesday; and till that time he should have books.

Accordingly, on Tuesday, the 17th of April, he was brought forth to dispute, one Dr. Smith being appointed by the papists to speak on their side against him.

Bishop Ridley began by telling them that he had been commanded by the queen's commissioners to prepare himself against that day; and then he proceeded thus:

"Now whilst I weighed with myself, how great a charge of the Lord's flock was of late committed unto me, for the which I am certain I must once

render an account to my Lord God (and that how soon He knoweth); and that moreover, by the commandment of the Apostle Peter, I ought to be ready always to give a reason of the hope that is in me, with meekness and reverence, unto every one that shall demand the same: besides this, considering my duty to the Church of Christ, and to your worships, being commissioners by public authority,—I determined with myself to obey your commandment, and so openly to declare unto you my mind touching the foresaid propositions. And albeit plainly to confess unto you the truth in these things which ye now demand of me, I have thought otherwise in times past than now I do; yet (I call God to record on my soul I lie not) I have not altered my judgment as now it is, either for the dread of any man or laws, either for the dread of any dangers of this world, either for any hope of commodity, but only for the love of the truth revealed unto me by the grace of God (as I am undoubtedly persuaded) in His holy word, and in the reading of the ancient fathers.”

After this, he proceeded to set forth his belief concerning the Holy Eucharist, and to shew in what respects the papists had erred from the ancient faith, making this declaration :

“ I say and confess with the Evangelist Luke, and with the Apostle Paul, that the bread on the which thanks are given, is the Body of Christ, in the remembrance of Him and of His death, to be set forth perpetually of the faithful until His coming.

“ I say and confess the bread which we break

to be the communion and partaking of Christ's Body, with the ancient faithful fathers.

“ I say and believe that there is not only a signification of Christ's Body set forth by the Sacrament, but also that therewith is given to the godly and faithful the grace of Christ's Body, that is, the food of life and immortality. And this I hold with Cyprian.

“ I say also with St. Augustine, that we eat life and we drink life; with Emisenus, that we feel the Lord to be present in grace; with Athanasius, that we receive celestial food, which cometh from above; the property of natural communion, with Hilary; the nature of flesh, and the benediction, which giveth life in bread and wine, with Cyril; and with the same Cyril, the virtue of the very Flesh of Christ, life, and grace of His Body—the property of the Only-begotten, that is to say, life, as He Himself in plain words expoundeth it.

“ I confess also with Basil, that we receive the mystical advent and coming of Christ, grace, and the virtue of His very nature; the sacrament of His very Flesh, with Ambrose; the Body by grace, with Epiphanius; spiritual Flesh, but not that which was sacrificed, with Hierome; grace flowing into a sacrifice, and the grace of the Spirit, with Chrysostom; grace and invisible verity, grace and society of the members of Christ's Body, with Augustine.

“ Finally, with Bertram (which was the last of all these), I confess that Christ's Body is in the Sacrament in this respect, namely (as he writeth), because there is in it the Spirit of Christ, that is, the power of the word of God, which not only

feedeth the soul, but also cleanseth it. Out of these, I suppose it may clearly appear unto all men how far we are from that opinion whereof some go about falsely to slander us to the world, saying we teach that the godly and faithful should receive nothing else at the Lord's table but a figure of the Body of Christ."

This belief the holy bishop said he held and affirmed with the word of God and the ancient fathers. He went on to answer all the questions asked him, and objections brought against him, by the papists; but, as he complained afterwards, they did not give him a fair and patient hearing, but continually reproached him, and railed at him; and though he entreated them to forbear, yet when he began again to read from his paper, they shouted, and cried out; so that he was reminded of the clamour stirred up by Demetrius, the silversmith of Ephesus, and of that which the Arians once raised against the Catholics, at a disputation held between them, when nothing could quietly be heard.

The answers which he had delivered he sent to Archbishop Cranmer, saying, that he had wished to have them corrected by him before he delivered them; but he trusted they agreed together in the substance of the matter which these answers contained. "I trust," he added, "the day of our delivery out of all miseries, and our entrance into perpetual joy and felicity, draweth nigh. The Lord strengthen us with His mighty Spirit of grace;" and he ended his letter with these words, "*Turn, or burn.*"

The three bishops were after this confined to

three different houses in Oxford, where their friends could not get leave to visit them. Dr. Ridley, in particular, suffered great restraint from Mrs. Irish, the wife of the mayor, in whose house he was kept, who was a harsh and ill-tempered woman, though, as it appears, her heart was afterwards softened towards the holy man who was her prisoner. During the many months of his imprisonment he wrote letters to various persons, which all express the same temper, of zeal and resignation, distrust of himself, and confidence in God. One of his own chaplains, who then fell away, wrote to him to try to shake his resolution, and persuade him to conform to the Romish errors. His reply affords a noble example of Christian faith and of apostolical admonition.

“ Sir, how nigh the day of my dissolution and departure out of this world is at hand I cannot tell—the Lord’s will be fulfilled, how soon soever it shall come. I know the Lord’s words must be verified in me, that I shall appear before the incorrupt Judge, and be accountable to Him for all my former life. And although the hope of His mercy is my sheet-anchor of eternal salvation, yet I am persuaded, that whosoever willingly neglecteth, and regardeth not to clear his conscience, he cannot have peace with God, nor a lively faith in His mercy. Conscience, therefore, moveth me, considering you were one of my family, and one of my household, of whom then I think I had a special care; but, alas, now when the trial doth separate the chaff from the corn, how small a deal it is, God knoweth, which the wind doth not blow away: this conscience, I say,

doth move me to fear, lest the lightness of my family should be laid to my charge for lack of more earnest and diligent instruction, which should have been done. But, blessed be God, which hath given me grace to see this my default, and to lament from the bottom of my heart before my departing hence. This conscience doth move me also now to require both you and my friend Dr. Harvey to remember your promises made to me in times past, of the pure setting forth and preaching of God's word and His truth. These promises, although you shall not need to fear to be charged with them of me hereafter before the world, yet look for none other (I exhort you, as my friends) but to be charged with them at God's hand. This conscience, and the love that I bear unto you, biddeth me now say unto you both, in God's name, 'Fear God, and love not the world; for God is able to cast both soul and body into hell-fire; when His wrath shall suddenly be kindled, blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.' And the saying of St. John is true, 'All that is in the world, as the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world; and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.'"

This admonition, so calm, so solemn, so affecting, produced such a powerful effect on the unhappy person to whom it was addressed, that he pined away with grief and remorse, and soon after died.

To others of his friends, both abroad and in England, Bishop Ridley wrote, to encourage and

confirm them, and to warn them against differences and divisions, as he had been ever careful to keep them stedfast in the principles of the ancient catholic Church. He expressed also in his letters his thankfulness towards those who assisted him and his fellow-prisoners by money and other things, ministering thus to their necessities, after the pattern of the early Christians. To Mr. Bradford, who was about to suffer at the stake, he wrote thus:—

“ Oh, dear brother, seeing the time is now come wherein it pleaseth the heavenly Father, for Christ our Saviour’s sake, to call upon you, and to bid you to come, happy are you that ever you were born, thus to be found awake at the Lord’s calling. Well, good servant and faithful, because thou hast been trusty in small matters, He shall set thee over great things, and thou shalt enter into the joy of thy Lord.

“ Oh, dear brother, what meaneth this, that you are sent into your own native country? The wisdom and policy of the world may mean what they will; but I trust God will so order the matter finally, by His fatherly providence, that some great occasion of God’s gracious goodness shall be plentifully poured abroad among His, our dear brethren in the country, by this your martyrdom. Where the martyrs for Christ’s sake shed their blood, and lost their lives, O what wondrous things hath Christ afterward wrought, to His glory, and confirmation of their doctrine! If it be not the place that sanctifieth the man, but the holy man doth by Christ sanctify the place,—brother Bradford, then happy and holy

shall be that place wherein thou shalt suffer, and shall be with thine ashes in Christ's cause sprinkled over withal. All thy country may rejoice of thee, that ever it brought forth such a one, which would render his life again in His cause of whom he had received it. Brother Bradford, so long as I shall understand thou art in thy journey, by God's grace I shall call upon our heavenly Father, for Christ's sake, to set thee safely home: and then, good brother, speak you, and pray for the remnant that are to suffer for Christ's sake, according to that thou then shalt know more clearly.

"We do look now every day when we shall be called on: blessed be God, I ween I am the weakest many ways of our company; and yet I thank our Lord God and heavenly Father by Christ, that since I heard of our dear brother Rogers' departing, and stout confession of Christ and His truth, even unto the death, my heart (blessed be God) rejoiced of it, that since that time (I say) I never felt any lumpish heaviness in my heart, as I grant I have felt sometimes before. O good brother, blessed be God in thee, and blessed be the time that ever I knew thee. Farewell, farewell. Your brother in Christ,

"NICHOLAS RIDLEY.

"Brother, farewell."

In a letter to another friend, he spoke as affectionately of Bradford; blessing God, at the same time, for Hooper, Sanders, Taylor, and others, who had suffered in the same cause.

Dr. Grindal, afterwards archbishop of Canter-

bury, was at this time in exile at Frankfort in Germany, with many others, who were thus preserved from the persecution in England. Bishop Ridley wrote to him there.

“ Dearly beloved brother Grindal,” he said, “ I say to you, and all the rest of your brethren in Christ with you, rejoice in the Lord; and as ye love me, and the other my reverend fathers and concaptives [fellow-captives]—which, undoubtedly, are the glory of Christ—lament not our state; but I beseech you and them all to give to our heavenly Father, for His endless mercies and unspeakable benefits, even in the midst of all our troubles given unto us, most hearty thanks. For know ye, that as the weight of His cross hath increased upon us, so He hath not, nor doth not, cease to multiply His mercies to strengthen us; and, I trust, yea, by His grace I doubt nothing but He will so do, for Christ our Master’s sake, even unto the end. To hear that you and our other brethren do find in your exile favour and grace with the magistrates, ministers, and citizens, at Frankfort, and other where, it doth greatly comfort (I dare say) all here that do indeed love Christ and His true word. I ensure you it indeed warmed my heart to hear you by chance to name some. . . . And, sir, seeing, you say, that there be in those parts with you of students and ministers so good a number, now therefore care ye not for us, otherwise than to wish that God’s glory may be set forth by us. For whensoever God shall call us home (as we look daily for none other, but when it shall please God to say, Come), you, blessed be God, are enough, through

His aid, to light and set up again the lantern of His word in England. . . . The Lord be merciful, and for Christ's sake pardon us our old unkindness and unthankfulness; for when He poured upon us the gifts of His manifold graces and favour, alas, we did not serve Him, nor render unto Him thanks according to the same. We pastors, many of us were too cold, and bare too much, alas, with the wicked world; our magistrates did abuse to their own worldly gain both God's Gospel and the ministers of the same. The people in many places were wayward and unkind. Thus of every kind, and of every sort, we have provoked God's anger and wrath to fall upon us; but blessed might He be, that hath not suffered His to continue in those ways which so wholly have displeased His sacred Majesty, but hath awaked them, by the fatherly correction of His own Son's cross, unto His glory and our endless salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

CHAPTER IV.

IN the month of September, 1555, a commission was sent to several popish bishops, to examine and judge Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley, for the opinions which they maintained in the disputations that they held at Oxford in May, June, and July, of the foregoing year. If they would recant these opinions, forgiveness was promised them in the

pope's name ; but if they persevered, they were to be proceeded against as heretics.

On September 30th they were brought into the divinity-school at Oxford, where the commissioners took their places and began the examination. Dr. Ridley refused to take off his cap when the pope's name was read in the commission, because he did not acknowledge the pope's authority to judge him, upon which one of the officers present was ordered to take it off his head ; after this the bishop of Lincoln exhorted him to recant, and proceeded to examine him, and Ridley defended his opinions. The next day the examination was continued in St. Mary's Church, where the commissioners were ready, on a high throne hung with cloth of tissue and silk, and Dr. Ridley was placed at a table below them. At the end of this second examination he was condemned as an heretic.

On October 15th Dr. Brooks, the bishop of Gloucester, with several others, came to Mr. Irish's house to speak to Dr. Ridley, and exhort him to recant ; but he answered him, " My lord, you know my mind fully herein : and as for the doctrine which I have taught, my conscience assureth me that it was sound, and according to God's word (to His honour be it spoken) ; the which doctrine (the Lord God being my helper) I will maintain so long as my tongue shall wag and breath is within my body, and in confirmation thereof seal the same with my blood."

After this they dressed him in all the robes which belonged to his priestly and episcopal office, in order to take these off, and so degrade him : he protested strongly against what they were doing ;

and when they had finished, he asked for a little further talk with the bishop of Gloucester; but the bishop told him that he was now to be considered as an excommunicated person, with whom no intercourse might be held; and Dr. Ridley then only desired to make a request to the queen for some persons to whom he had given leases whilst he was bishop of London, lest they should suffer loss on his account, and also on behalf of his sister and brother-in-law. When he came to his sister's name he could not speak for weeping, but he soon recovered himself, and read through his supplication to the queen;—these requests he repeated at the very time of his martyrdom.

The degradation being concluded, and all things finished, Dr. Brooks called the bailiffs, delivering to them Dr. Ridley, with this charge: to keep him safely from any man speaking with him, and that they should bring him safe to the place of execution when they were commanded. Then Dr. Ridley in praising God burst out with these words, and said, "God, I thank Thee, and to Thy praise be it spoken, there is none of you all able to lay to my charge any open or notorious crime; for if you could, it should surely be laid in my lap, I see very well." Whereunto Dr. Brooks said he played the part of a proud pharisee, exalting and praising himself.

But Dr. Ridley said, "No, no, no; as I have said before, to God's glory be it spoken. I confess myself to be a miserable, wretched sinner, and have great need of God's help and mercy, and do daily call and cry for the same: therefore I pray you have no such opinion of me."

Dr. Ridley wrote before his death a farewell to

his friends, and to those places where he had resided, of which the beginning is as follows :

“ At the name of Jesus let every knee bow, both of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and let every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, unto the glory of God the Father. Amen.

“ As a man minding to take a far journey, and to depart from his familiar friends, commonly and naturally hath a desire to bid his friends farewell before his departure, so likewise now I, looking daily when I should be called to depart from you (O all ye my dearly beloved brethren and sisters in our Saviour Christ that dwell here in this world), having a like mind towards you all, (and blessed be God for such time and leisure, whereof I right heartily thank His heavenly goodness,) to bid you all my dear brethren and sisters (I say, in Christ) that dwell upon the earth, after such manner as I can, farewell.

“ Farewell, my dear brother, George Shipline, whom I have ever found faithful, trusty, and loving in all states and conditions; and now in the time of my cross, over all others to me most friendly and stedfast, and that which liked me ever best over all other things, in God's cause ever hearty.

“ Farewell, my dear sister Alice, his wife. I am glad to hear of thee, that thou dost take Christ's cross which is laid now (blessed be God) both on thy back and mine in good part. Thank thou God that hath given thee a godly and loving husband; see thou honour him and obey him according to God's law. Honour thy mother-in-law, his

mother, and love all those that pertain unto him, being ready to do them good as it shall lie in thy power. As for thy children, I doubt not of thy husband but that He which hath given him a heart to love and fear God, and in God them that pertain unto him, shall also make him friendly and beneficial unto thy children.

“Farewell, my well-beloved brother John Ridley of the Walton, and you, my gentle and loving sister Elizabeth; whom, besides the natural league of amity, your tender love, which you were said ever to bear towards me above the rest of your brethren, doth bind me to love. My mind was to have acknowledged this your loving affection, and to have acquitted it with deeds, and not with words alone. Your daughter Elizabeth I bid farewell, whom I love for the meek and gentle spirit that God hath given her, which is a precious thing in the sight of God.

“Farewell, my beloved sister of Unthank, with all your children, nephews, and nieces. Since the departing of my brother Hugh, my mind was to have been to them instead of their father; but the Lord God must and will be their father, if they would love Him and fear Him, and live in the trade of His law.

“Farewell, my well-beloved and worshipful cousins, Master Richard Ridley of Willimounts-wike, and your wife; and I thank you for all your kindness, shewed both to me, and also to all your own kinsfolk and mine. Good cousin, as God hath set you in our stock and kindred (not for any respect of your person, but of His abundant grace and godness), to be, as it were, the bell-

wether to order and conduct the rest, and hath also endued you with His manifold gifts of grace, both heavenly and worldly, above others; so I pray you, good cousin (as my trust and hope is in you), continue and increase in the maintenance of the truth, honesty, righteousness, and all true godliness, and to the uttermost of your power withstand falsehood, untruth, unrighteousness, and all ungodliness, which is forbidden and condemned by the word and laws of God.

“Farewell, my young cousin Ralph Whitfield. Oh, your time was very short with me. My mind was to have done you good, and yet you caught in that little time a loss; but I trust it shall be recompensed, as it shall please Almighty God.

“Farewell, all my whole kindred and countrymen, farewell in Christ all together. The Lord, which is the searcher of secrets, knoweth that, according to my heart's desire, my hope was of late that I should have come among you, and to have brought with me abundance of Christ's blessed Gospel, according to the duty of that office and ministry whereunto amongst you I was chosen, named, and appointed by the mouth of that our late peerless prince, king Edward, and so also denounced openly in his court by his privy council.

“I warn you all, my well-beloved kinsfolk and countrymen, that ye be not amazed or astonished at the kind of my departure and dissolution; for I ensure you, I think it the most honour that ever I was called unto in all my life, and therefore I thank my Lord God heartily for it, that it hath

pleased Him to call me of His great mercy unto this high honour, to suffer death willingly for His sake and in His cause; unto the which honour He hath called the holy prophets and dearly-beloved apostles, and his blessed chosen martyrs. For know ye, that I doubt no more but that the causes wherefore I am put to death are God's causes, and the cause of the truth, than I doubt that the Gospel which John wrote is the Gospel of Christ, or that Paul's epistles are the very word of God. And to have a heart willing to abide and stand in God's cause and in Christ's quarrel even unto death, I ensure thee (O man) it is an inestimable gift of God, given only to the true elects and dearly-beloved children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. For the holy apostle, and also martyr in Christ's cause, Saint Peter, saith, If ye suffer rebuke in the name of Christ, that is, in Christ's cause, then are ye happy and blessed; for the glory of the Spirit of God resteth upon you. If for rebuke's sake, suffered in Christ's name, a man is pronounced by the mouth of that holy apostle blessed and happy, how much more happy and blessed is he that hath the grace to suffer death also? Wherefore, all ye that be my true lovers and friends, rejoice, and rejoice with me again, and render with me hearty thanks to God our heavenly Father, that for His Son's sake, my Saviour and Redeemer Christ, He hath vouchsafed to call me, being else but a sinful and a vile wretch, to call me (I say) unto this high dignity of His true prophets, of His faithful apostles, and of His holy elect and

chosen martyrs,—that is, to die and to spend this temporal life in the defence and maintenance of His eternal and everlasting truth.

“Ye know, that be my countrymen dwelling upon the borders, where (alas) the true man suffereth oftentimes much wrong at the thief’s hand, if it chance a man to be slain of a thief (as it often chanceth there), which went out with his neighbours to help him to rescue his goods again, that the more cruelly he be slain, and the more stedfastly he stuck by his neighbour in the fight against the face of the thief, the more favour and friendship shall all his posterity have for the slain man’s sake of all them that be true, as long as the memory of his fact and his posterity doth endure: even so ye that be my kinsfolk and countrymen, know ye (howsoever the blind, ignorant, and wicked world hereafter shall rail upon my death, which thing they cannot do worse than their fathers did of the death of Christ our Saviour, of His holy prophets, and apostles, and martyrs),—know ye (I say) that both before God, and all them that be godly, and that truly know and follow the laws of God, ye have, and shall have by God’s grace, ever cause to rejoice, and to thank God highly, and to think good of it, and in God to rejoice of me your flesh and blood, whom God of His gracious goodness hath vouchsafed to associate unto the blessed company of His holy martyrs in heaven: and I doubt not in the faithful fellowship of His elect and chosen people, but at both their hands, in my cause, ye shall rather find the more favour and grace; for the Lord saith, that He will be both to them and theirs

that love Him, the more loving again in a thousand generations—the Lord is so full of mercy to them (I say) and theirs which do love Him indeed. And Christ saith again, that no man can shew more love than to give his life for his friend.”

“The night before he suffered, his beard was washed, and his legs; and as he sat at supper the same night at Mr. Irish’s (who was his keeper), he bade his hostess and the rest at the board to his marriage; ‘for,’ saith he, ‘to-morrow I must be married:’ and so shewed himself to be as merry as ever he was at any time before. And wishing his sister at his marriage, he asked his brother-in-law sitting at the table, whether she could find in her heart to be there or no; and he answered, ‘Yea, I dare say, with all her heart:’ at which word he said he was glad to hear of her so much therein. So at this talk Mrs. Irish wept.

“But Master Ridley comforted her; and said, ‘Oh, Mistress Irish, you love me not now, I see well enough; for in that you weep, it doth appear that you will not be at my marriage, neither are content therewith. Indeed, you be not so much my friend as I thought you had been. But quiet yourself; though my breakfast shall be somewhat sharp and painful, yet I am sure my supper shall be more pleasant and sweet.’

“When they arose from the table, his brother offered him to watch all night with him; but he said, ‘No, no, that you shall not. For I mind (God willing) to go to bed, and to sleep as quietly to-night as ever I did in my life.’ So his brother

departed, exhorting him to be of good cheer, for the reward was great.

“Upon the north side of the town of Oxford, in the ditch over against Balliol College, the place of execution was appointed; and, for fear of any tumult that might arise to hinder the burning of them, the Lord Williams was commanded by the queen’s letters, and the householders of the city, to be there assistant, sufficiently appointed. And when every thing was in readiness, the prisoners were brought forth by the mayor and the bailiffs.

“Master Ridley had a fair black gown, furred, and faced with foins, such as he was wont to wear being bishop; and a tippet of velvet, furred likewise about his neck; a velvet nightcap upon his head, and a corner cap upon the same; going in a pair of slippers to the stake, and going between the mayor and an alderman.

“After him came Master Latimer, in a poor Bristol frieze-frock, all worn, with his buttoned cap, and a kerchief on his head, all ready to the fire, a new long shroud hanging over his hose down to the feet; which at the first sight stirred men’s hearts to rue upon them, beholding on the one side the honour they sometimes had—on the other, the calamity whereunto they were fallen.

“Master Doctor Ridley, as he passed towards Bocardo, looked up where Master Cranmer did lie, hoping belike to have seen him at the glass window, and to have spoken unto him. But then Master Cranmer was busy with friar Soto and his fellows, disputing together; so that he could not see him through that occasion. Then Master

Ridley, looking back, espied Master Latimer coming after. Unto whom he said, 'Oh, be ye there?' 'Yea,' said Master Latimer, 'have after as fast as I can follow.' So he following a pretty way off, at length they came both to the stake, the one after the other; where first Doctor Ridley entering the place, marvellous earnestly holding up both his hands, looked towards heaven. Then shortly after espying Master Latimer, with a wondrous cheerful look ran to him, embraced and kissed him, and, as they that stood near reported, comforted him, saying, 'Be of good heart, brother; for God will either assuage the fury of the flame, or else strengthen us to bear it.'

"With that went he to the stake, kneeled down by it, kissed it, most effectually prayed; and behind, Master Latimer kneeled, as earnestly calling upon God as he. After they arose, the one talked with the other a little while, till they which were appointed to see the execution removed themselves out of the sun. What they said, I can learn of no man.

"Then Doctor Smith began his sermon to them, which lasted about a quarter of an hour.

"Doctor Ridley said to Master Latimer, 'Will you begin to answer the sermon, or shall I?' Master Latimer said, 'Begin you first, I pray you.' 'I will,' said Master Ridley.

"Then the sermon being ended, Doctor Ridley and Master Latimer kneeled down upon their knees towards my Lord Williams, and divers other commissioners appointed for that purpose, which sat upon a form thereby; unto whom Master Ridley said, 'I beseech you, my lord, even for

Christ's sake, that I may speak but two or three words.' And whilst my lord bent his head to the mayor and vice-chancellor, to know (as it appeared) whether he might give him leave to speak, the bailiffs and vice-chancellor ran hastily to him, and with their hands stopped his mouth, and said, 'Master Ridley, if you will revoke your erroneous opinions, and recant the same, you shall not only have liberty so to do, but also the benefit of a subject,—that is, have your life.' 'Not otherwise?' said Master Ridley;—'no' (quoth Master Ridley): 'so long as the breath is in my body, I will never deny my Lord Christ and His known truth: God's will be done in me.' And with that he rose up, and said with a loud voice, 'Well, then, I commit our cause to Almighty God, which shall indifferently judge all.'

"To whose saying, Master Latimer added his old posy, 'Well, there is nothing hid but it shall be opened:' and he said he could answer Smith well enough, if he might be suffered. Incontinently they were commanded to make them ready, which they with all meekness obeyed. Master Ridley took his gown and his tippet, and gave it to his brother-in-law Master Shipside, who all his time of imprisonment, although he might not be suffered to come to him, lay there at his own charges to provide him necessaries, which from time to time he sent him by the sergeant that kept him. Some other of his apparel that was little worth he gave away; other the bailiffs took.

"He gave away besides divers other small things to gentlemen standing by, and many of them pitifully weeping—as to Sir Henry Lea

he gave a new groat ; and to divers of my Lord Williams' gentlemen, some napkins, some nutmegs, races of ginger, his watch, and such other things as he had about him, to every one that stood next him. Happy was he that could get any rag of him. Master Latimer gave nothing, but very quietly suffered his keeper to pull off his hose, and his other array, which, to look into, was very simple ; and being stripped into his shroud, he seemed as comely a person to them that were there present, as one should lightly see ; and whereas in his clothes he appeared a withered and crooked silly old man, he now stood bolt upright, as comely a father as one might lightly behold.

“ Then Master Ridley, being in his shirt, held up his hands, and said, ‘ O heavenly Father, I give unto Thee most hearty thanks, for that Thou hast called me to be a professor of Thee, even unto death. I beseech Thee, Lord God, take mercy upon this realm of England, and deliver the same from all her enemies.’

“ Then the smith took a chain of iron, and brought the same about both Doctor Ridley and Master Latimer ; and as he was knocking in a staple, Doctor Ridley took the chain in his hand, and shook the same, and, looking aside to the smith, said, ‘ Good fellow, knock it in hard ; for the flesh will have its course.’ Then his brother did bring him gunpowder in a bag, and would have tied the same about his neck. Master Ridley asked what it was. His brother said, ‘ Gunpowder.’ ‘ Then,’ said he, ‘ I take it to be sent of God ; therefore I will receive it as sent of Him. And have you any,’ said he, ‘ for my brother ?’ meaning Master

Latimer. 'Yea, sir, that I have,' quoth his brother. 'Then give it unto him,' said he, 'betime, lest ye come too late.' So his brother went, and carried of the same gunpowder unto Master Latimer.

"In the meantime, Doctor Ridley spake unto the Lord Williams, and said, 'My lord, I must be a suitor to your lordship in the behalf of divers poor men, and specially in the cause of my poor sister. I have made a supplication to the queen's majesty on their behalf. I beseech your lordship, for Christ's sake, to be a mean to her grace for them. My brother here hath the supplication, and will resort to your lordship to certify you hereof. There is nothing in all the world that troubleth my conscience (I praise God), this only excepted. Whiles I was in the see of London, divers poor men took leases of me, and agreed with me for the same. Now, I hear say that the bishop that now occupieth the same room will not allow my grants unto them made; but, contrary unto all law and conscience, hath taken from them their livings, and will not suffer them to enjoy the same. I beseech you, my lord, be a mean for them; you shall do a good deed, and God will reward you.'

"Then they brought a fagot kindled with fire, and laid the same down at Doctor Ridley's feet; to whom Master Latimer said, 'Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England, as, I trust, shall never be put out.'

"And so the fire being given unto them, when Doctor Ridley saw the fire flaming up towards him,

he cried with a wonderful loud voice, 'Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit. Lord, receive my spirit!' which he said in Latin; and after repeated this latter part often in English, 'Lord, Lord, receive my spirit!' Master Latimer crying as vehemently on the other side, 'O Father of heaven, receive my soul!' who received the flame, as it were, embracing of it. After that he had stroked his face with his hands, and, as it were, bathed them a little in the fire, he soon died, as it appeared with very little pain or none.

"But Master Ridley, by reason of the evil making of the fire unto him, because the wooden fagots were laid about the gosse, and over-high built, the fire burned first beneath, being kept down by the wood; which, when he felt, he desired them, for Christ's sake, to let the fire come unto him; which when his brother-in-law heard, but not well understood, intending to rid him out of his pain (for the which cause he gave attendance), as one in such sorrow, not well advised what he did, heaped fagots upon him, so that he clean covered him, which made the fire more vehement beneath, that it burned clean all his nether parts before it once touched the upper, and that made him leap up and down under the fagots, and often desire him to let the fire come unto him, saying, 'I cannot burn.' Which indeed appeared well; for after his legs were consumed by reason of his struggling through the pain (whereof he had no release, but only his contentation in God), he shewed that side towards us clean, shirt and all, untouched with flame. Yet in all this torment he forgot not to call upon God

still, having in his mouth, 'Lord, have mercy upon me!' intermingling this cry, 'Let the fire come unto me! I cannot burn.' In which pains he laboured till one of the standers-by, with his bill pulled off the fagots above; and where he saw the fire flame up, he wrested himself unto that side. And when the flame touched the gunpowder, he was seen stir no more, but burned on the other side, falling down at Master Latimer's feet. Which some said happened by reason that the chain loosed; other said, that he fell over the chain by reason of the poise of his body, and the weakness of the nether limbs. Some said, that before he was like to fall from the stake, he desired them to hold him to it with their bills. Howsoever it was, surely it moved hundreds to tears in beholding the horrible sight. For I think there was none that had not clean exiled all humanity and mercy, which would not have lamented to behold the fury of the fire so to rage upon their bodies. Some took it grievously to see their deaths, whose lives they held full dear. Some pitied their persons, that thought their souls had no need thereof. His brother moved many men, seeing his miserable case,—seeing (I say) him compelled to such infelicity, that he thought then to do him best service when he hastened his end. Some cried out of the luck to see his endeavour, who most dearly loved him and sought his release, turn to his greater vexation and increase of pain. But whoso considereth their preferments in time past, the places of honour that they sometime occupied in this commonwealth, the favour they were in with their princes, and

the opinion of learning they had, could not choose but sorrow with tears to see so great dignity, honour, and estimation, so necessary members sometime accounted, so many godly virtues, the study of so many years, such excellent learning, to be put into the fire, and consumed in one moment. Well, dead they are, and the reward of this world they have already. What reward remaineth for them in heaven, the day of the Lord's glory, when He cometh with His saints, shall shortly, I trust, declare."

